









CUNDURANGO.

LETTER

FROM



THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

ADDRESSED

TO HON. N. P. BANKS, CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,

INCLOSING

*Correspondence of the Department of State with the minister of the United States in Ecuador, in relation to "cundurango."*

FEBRUARY 5, 1872.—Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
Washington, January 18, 1872.

SIR: In the month of March, 1870, the Secretary of State received from Mr. Flores, the minister resident of the republic of Ecuador, a vegetable called "cundurango," produced in Ecuador, to which important medicinal qualities were attributed.

In accordance with the wish of the minister, that the actual properties of the plant, which were supposed to promise the most important results in certain distressing and prevalent diseases, might be tested, the quantity of the vegetable received was distributed to the War and Navy Departments, Bureau of Agriculture, New York Hospital, and Massachusetts General Hospital. A reply in each case has been received.

The quantity received was not large, but the medical qualities claimed for the plant were such as to attract a large amount of public interest, and led to very frequent inquiries as to its real virtue, and demands for a supply of the article which it was impossible to satisfy.

The importance of the remedial qualities attributed to the "cundurango," and the interest manifested by large numbers of sufferers from the disease (cancer) for the cure of which it was supposed to be a specific, suggest the making public of the replies that have been received by the Department of State, and all the information possessed by it upon the subject. I therefore submit it to you.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

HAMILTON FISH.

Hon. NATHANIEL P. BANKS,

*Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs,*

*House of Representatives.*

*List of papers.*

No. 1. Document marked "cundurango."  
 No. 2. Mr. Fish to Mr. Belknap, April 7, 1871.  
 No. 3. Mr. Fish to Mr. Belknap, June 15, 1871.  
 No. 4. Mr. Robeson to Mr. Fish, June 19, 1871; one inclosure.  
 No. 5. Mr. Belknap to Mr. Fish, July 3, 1871; two inclosures.  
 No. 6. Mr. Fish to Mr. Capron, April 20, 1871.  
 No. 7. Mr. Capron to Mr. Fish, May 17, 1871; one inclosure.  
 No. 8. Mr. Fish to the president of New York Hospital, April 22, 1871.  
 No. 9. Mr. Fish to Mr. Trimble, June 15, 1871.  
 No. 10. Dr. Shaw to Mr. Fish, June 14, 1871.  
 No. 11. Dr. Shaw to Mr. Fish, June 19, 1871.  
 No. 12. Mr. Murray to Mr. Fish, August 1, 1871; one inclosure.  
 No. 13. Drs. Busey and Lee to Mr. Fish, July 24, 1871.  
 No. 14. Dr. Ashford to Mr. Fish, August 29, 1871.  
 No. 15. Mr. Weile to Mr. Fish, No. 45, August 25, 1871; one inclosure.  
 No. 16. Mr. Wing to Mr. Fish, No. 137, August 26, 1871; one inclosure.  
 No. 17. Mr. Wing to Mr. Fish, No. 143, September 14, 1871; one inclosure.  
 No. 18. Mr. Wing to Mr. Fish, No. 156, October 19, 1871; one inclosure.  
 No. 19. Mr. Wing to Mr. Fish, No. 162, October 27, 1871; one inclosure.

## No. 1.

## CUNDURANGO.

*Mr. Flores to Mr. Fish.*

[Translation.]

WASHINGTON, March 14, 1871.

MR. MINISTER: I have received from my government, in order to offer it to you, a vegetable called "cundurango," which is produced in the province of Loja, Ecuador, and to which great medicinal qualities are attributed, as you will see by the annexed extracts, copied from No. 425 of the official journal of Ecuador.

In case your excellency may think proper to accept this little offering, I take the liberty of inclosing the bill of lading of the box which contains it, to the end that you may be pleased, if you see fit, to return it to me, with the necessary order for the custom-house at New York, and to take such other measures as you may think proper.

I have been specially directed by my government to communicate the result of the analyses and experiments which may be made. I will therefore thank your excellency to deign to afford me, as far as possible, the means of obeying this order.

In the hope that your excellency will be pleased to give to this matter the attention which is demanded, not only by humanity and science, but by the mercantile interests of Ecuador and the United States of America, I have the honor to reiterate to your excellency the assurance of my very high and distinguished consideration, and to subscribe myself

Your excellency's very obedient servant,

A. FLORES.

[Translation.]

*Extracts from the reports of Doctors Casares, Eguiguren, &c., &c.*

QUITO, April 28, 1870.

I am happy to reply to your excellency's esteemed communication of the 21st instant, in which you informed me that the supreme government has resolved to send fifty pounds of the "cundurango," in order that this vegetable may be analyzed by scientific societies of Paris and London, and I am ordered to make a circumstantial report of the therapeutic effects which I have obtained by its application in some diseases.

\* \* \* \* \*

About the month of September last, I commenced to administer this remedy to Bernabé M——, who was suffering from a cancer, and the favorable result of this treatment, which was obtained in a few days, I thought proper to bring to the notice of the supreme government; but as the small quantity which I had obtained gave out, I was unable to continue the use of it.

\* \* \* \* \*

The domestic, Santos A——, of Mrs. Mercedes Larrea, has suffered a long time from a cancerous ulcer on the thigh of her right leg; she has always been attended by respectable physicians without any favorable result; she is now well, only two or three lines being wanting where it has healed up.

Juan Baetista G—— was suffering from a cancer in the lower lip; I removed it apparently entirely; four months afterward, however, the cancer reappeared, and instead of resorting to a new operation, I applied the "cundurango," which caused it to disappear completely.

Mr. D——, now priest of the parish of N——, has long been a sufferer from a cancer above and below his left eye; he has been for a short time under the influence of this medicament, and the edges of ulcer have become depressed, the suppuration has changed its aspect, and the cancerous humor does not exist.

The above are the cases of cancer which I have observed and subjected to the action of cundurango, and I have the satisfaction of being able to state that all the aforesaid patients are known in the country, and may be examined by any person desiring to do so.

\* \* \* \* \*

Passing to another case, I will state that it is a year since José A—— entered this hospital, suffering from intermittent fever and serofulous ulcers in the breast. Constant and diligent care did nothing toward restoring his health, until I resolved to administer the cundurango to him, together with arsenic, and his present condition is very encouraging.

\* \* \* \* \*

I will remark that the cancers which I treated with the cundurango were already in the form of *fungus haematoches*, and none in the state of rawness.

\* \* \* \* \*

The plan adopted in its use is as follows: First regulate the digestion and the biliary secretions in the best manner possible; surround the patient with pure air; take great care to secure cleanliness; give food which is easily digested; give him a cup of the decoction of cundurango in the morning, and another at night, until you observe that its action has caused debility; in which case I have replaced it sometimes by diuretics, together with tonics, and sometimes by diaphoretics and mild infusions of quinine. In cases of cancer I have made local applications of poultices, formed with the prepared shell of an egg and with water, alternating with some ointments, promotive of suppuration, as was required by the state of the ulcer, after chloride lotions, slightly astringent.

In syphilis the internal method is entirely similar to the one above mentioned; and locally, I have only used sometimes aromatic wine, and at other times simple cerate, according to the state of irritation of the part.

In case the result of the analysis of the cundurango be favorable, I think it proper for me to mention the fact that I have been assured that the kernel contained in the fruit of this vegetable kills dogs, just as strychnine does.

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Reminding the patient of this terrible circumstance, (the difficulty of saving his life,) I obliged him to take the remedy, which I alone possessed in Quito. After a few days it produced so surprising an effect that Dr. Casares was astonished at the rapidity with which the cure took place, until the edges became cicatrized, and also the bone, as if it had been a wound in soft parts and in a healthy subject. I caused Dr. Casares to be informed of the remedy which had cured him, and this professor appreciated a medicament of such high importance; and afterward learning that a servant of my brother (Manuel Eguiguren) had cured himself some months before of an ulcerated cancer which resisted the known appliances of art, he began to give it to a patient

who was by chance in the hospital, and who would have died two or three days afterward if this remedy had not been so seasonably given to him, as I was assured by Dr. Casares when he took me to see him.

I think it a matter of the utmost importance to point out the manner of administering this remedy, in order to facilitate observations in the places to which it is sent. The stem, (or trunk,) cut into small pieces, is boiled in water until the latter becomes of the color of sherry wine or strong tea ; of this decoction from four to five ounces are given, properly sweetened, once or twice a day, according to the urgency of the case ; but it is to be remarked that it cannot be given many days in succession, as it gives rise, in some persons, to nervous phenomena of considerable importance, which disappear on the simple suspension of the remedy.

It has been used in this manner hitherto, as it is still an empirical remedy, and because it is thus used in Loja, where it was discovered.—*El Nacional, (official journal of Ecuador,) No. 425.*

His Excellency the MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR, &c.

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Mr. Wing to Mr. Fish.

No. 54.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
Quito, Ecuador, January 5, 1871.

SIR : For some time past I have been aware of the recent discovery of a remedy which was declared to be a specific for the cure of some of the most terrible diseases which scourge humanity. Not being willing, however, to excite hopes liable to the chance of disappointment, I have refrained from bringing it to the attention of the Department hitherto.

Recent experiments which have been explained to me by credible parties, in addition to information concerning certain experiments set on foot by myself, both in Europe and the United States, have convinced me that there is, to say the least of it, enough of reality in the curative properties of the remedy to render it incumbent upon me to lay the matter before the Department ; believing, as I do, that if the Department will at once give publicity to it, many valuable lives may be saved, and relief afforded in most painful and distressing cases of affliction.

The remedy in question is the wood of a tree called the "cundurango," existing chiefly in the southernmost province of Ecuador, (Loja,) and its peculiar virtues were discovered, it is said, by one of those trivial incidents which evince oftentimes how humble are the means used by Providence to make known the mysteries of nature and the wonders of science.

The ignorant wife of a common Indian laborer, who had for some time suffered most fearfully from an internal cancer, concluded finally to administer eternal relief to him by the simple process of mixing poison in his food. The woman, it would seem, acted in perfect good faith and honesty of purpose and with no sinister or malevolent design. She wished really to save her husband from his agony ; and, feeling that his cure was absolutely impossible, she determined to administer a decoction of the leaves of the cundurango, which are said to be an active poison. Not finding the leaves at hand, she administered a decoction of the wood itself.

To her surprise the man at once began to rally, and as her first attempt had failed, she still continued to dose him with the lotion from day to day in increasing quantities.

As a result, the man entirely recovered, and the matter becoming public, further tests have established the powers of the wood as a remedial agency.

Only last night I was informed from the most eminent sources in the land that some of the cures effected by it were truly miraculous.

I give the report in regard to the manner in which these properties were manifested as common rumor has it.

Its efficacy in cancerous and venereal diseases has been already approved, and I judge by analogy that it would likewise prove beneficial in serofulous and ulcerous affections of different types.

Certainly it commends itself to the experiments of the learned practitioners of the United States; and if its curative qualities go no further than to conquer that fearful malady, the cancer, so long deemed hopelessly incurable, and so fraught with anguish of mind and agony of body, and certain death hitherto, then truly will it have accomplished a most noble end.

The condition of the inland roads and the difficulty of transportation to the coast will for a time interfere with its exportation in large quantities, but the energy of President Morena will eventually open it up to the commerce of the world and the relief of the afflicted.

In this connection I may add that this month the President of Ecuador will forward to the State Department at Washington one boalter of the cundurango for experiment and distribution.

I have thanked him for his courtesy and consideration, and I have every hope that under the enlightened supervision of the Department medical science may achieve therewith one of its most valuable victories.

Appended, as accompaniment A, I transmit the simple recipe, setting forth the manner in which the article is as yet applied to use. Experiment and experience may soon be enabled to adopt a more powerful and skillful method of application.

If the Department sees fit to make this matter immediately public, it will afford me genuine pleasure to aid both experimental science and suffering humanity by any means that my location and information on the subject may render practicable.

E. RUMSEY WING.

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[Accompaniment A.]

*Mode of using the "cundurango."*

A decoction of the cundurango is made out of a small piece of the wood, beaten out flat, and half an ounce of which is boiled in three teacupfuls of water.

Of this decoction one teaempful must be taken in the morning and another at night.

If the patient has ulcers, they should be kept very clean by the use of aromatic wine or simple ointment, according to the degree of inflammation.

The decoction is only to be used for fifteen days consecutively. An interval of fifteen days must then elapse, when the remedy may again be resumed for the same length of time.

Great attention must be given in order to keep the digestive organs in the best possible condition.

With regard to any other counsel, the general aspect of the patient must serve as guide.

In this country (Ecuador) the cundurango has proven itself to be a powerful restorative, and must eventually work a complete revolution in the treatment of cancerous, venereal, and ulcerous diseases.

DR. CASARES.

QUITO, January 4, 1870.

A true translation.

E. RUMSEY WING.

*Mr. Wing to Mr. Fish.*

No. 61.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES.

*Quito, Ecuador, January 25, 1871.*

SIR: Referring to my dispatch No. 54, the contents of which I regard as very important, I desire to correct a slight error into which I had fallen, as I learn from conversations with President Morena and Minister Leon.

The accidental manner of the discovery of the remarkable qualities of the cundurango, as detailed in the dispatch referred to, is entirely correct, with the single exception that the fruit, and not the leaves, is poisonous, and it was in the absence of the fruit that the woman used the wood, supposing, as she did, that it must contain the same destructive properties.

From information given me by the distinguished gentlemen mentioned above, I am more than ever convinced of the great value of the discovery and the necessity for immediate scientific experiments with the wood.

E. RUMSEY WING.

## No. 2.

*Mr. Fish to W. Belknap.*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

*Washington, April 7, 1871.*

SIR: I transmit copies of a printed pamphlet containing a note to this Department from Mr. Flores, the minister of Ecuador here, and dispatches from Mr. Wing, the minister of the United States in that republic. These papers relate to a medicament called "cundurango," recently discovered in that country, which is supposed to be an efficient remedy for cancer and other diseases. A sample of the article accompanies this letter. I will thank you, if there should appear to be no objection to that course, to cause it to be administered by the medical staff of the Army, and the result to be communicated to this Department for the information of the government of Ecuador.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

HAMILTON FISH.

Hon. WM. W. BELKNAP,  
*Secretary of War.*

*Inclosure.*

Printed copies of a pamphlet relative to a medicament called "cundurango," found in Ecuador.

[Same *mutatis mutandis* to Hon. Geo. M. Robeson, Secretary of the Navy.]

## No. 3.

*Mr. Fish to Mr. Belknap.*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

*Washington, June 15, 1871.*

SIR: Referring to my letter to you of the 7th of April last, requesting you to cause to be administered by the medical staff of the Army

the medicament called "cundurango," sent therewith, I will thank you to inform me of the result of the experiments made with the remedy referred to, in order that it may be communicated to the Ecuadorian government.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

HAMILTON FISH.

Hon. W. W. BELKNAP,  
*Secretary of War.*

[Same *mutatis mutandis* to the Secretary of the Navy.]

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No. 4.

*Mr. Robeson to Mr. Fish.*

NAVY DEPARTMENT,  
Washington, June 19, 1871.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th instant, and to inclose herewith a copy of a note from the chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in relation to the disposition of the "cundurango" furnished by the Department of State.

As soon as further reports are received in relation to the medicine, the Department will communicate them to you.

Very respectfully,

GEO. M. ROBESON,  
*Secretary of the Navy.*

Hon. HAMILTON FISH,  
*Secretary of State.*

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NAVY DEPARTMENT,  
Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, June 17, 1871.

SIR: I have the honor to report, for the information of the Secretary of State, that the supply of cundurango furnished this Bureau was scarcely sufficient to make a fair trial of its efficacy.

It was divided between two medical officers of the Navy having cases of cancer in charge, both careful observers, and one of them interested to the greatest extent in the patient, a member of his family.

As yet no results have been reported.

Very respectfully,

W. M. WOOD,  
*Surgeon General U. S. Navy, Chief of Bureau.*

Hon. GEO. M. ROBESON,  
*Secretary of the Navy.*

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No. 5.

*Mr. Belknap to Mr. Fish.*

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
Washington City, July 3, 1871.

SIR: Acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 15th ultimo, I have the honor to respond to its contained request for information of

the result of experiments made with the so-called "cancer remedy," cundurango, by medical gentlemen of the Army, by inclosing copies of reports of Drs. B. Norris, United States Army, and G. Grant, late of United States Volunteers, of their experiments with the plant. The Surgeon General reports the quantity furnished his Department as entirely insufficient for trial, and it is impossible to form an opinion of the efficacy or inertness of the medicament from the reports of the gentlemen referred to above.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. W. BELKNAP,  
*Secretary of War.*

Honorable the SECRETARY OF STATE.

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 20, 1871.

**GENERAL:** I have the honor to report as follows on the treatment of cancer by cundurango, as prescribed in the case of Isabella Green, aged forty-three years. She had been my patient thirty-one months, suffering from schirrhœus of the right mamma. I removed the tumor on the 5th of September, 1869, and again on the 14th of May, 1870. It reappeared in July following, and on the 24th of April, 1871, the day on which she began to use the remedy, it occupied a remaining small portion of the mammary gland, and extended over its original situation as far as the axilla. The axillary glands were involved, the arm and hand swollen, and the skin ulcerated, forming three circular sores, which discharged thin, offensive pus, peculiar to sloughing of this variety of cancer. She complained of pain and irritable stomach, and was too feeble to leave her apartment.

Observing as nearly as possible the directions laid down by Dr. Casares of Ecuador, and contained in a pamphlet published for information by the Department of State, I prepared a decoction by putting half an ounce of crushed cundurango with twelve ounces of water, and boiling it down to six fluid ounces. Of this, one ounce was taken morning and evening, until the 11th of May, eighteen days, when the dose was reduced to half an ounce, and continued to the 29th of May.

Whether as coincident or in consequence of this treatment, the tumor completely sloughed out, leaving the integument sound and a surface granulating beneath. Irritability of the stomach, with pain in swallowing on pressure upon the epigastrium, increased, and the patient, much emaciated, died on the 6th of June. Post-mortem examination revealed cancer of the stomach and spleen; a hard, flat tumor, leaf-shaped, starting from the point of entrance of the œsophagus, embraced a portion of the spleen, which could only be separated from the stomach by tearing the morbid growth common to both organs.

I am indebted to Dr. J. J. Woodward, United States Army, for microscopical examination of the tumor and specimen, and for his note appended to this report.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

BASIL NORRIS,  
*Surgeon United States Army.*

General J. K. BARNES,

*Surgeon General U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.*

Official copy:

C. H. CRANE,  
*Assistant Surgeon General.*

**DOCTOR:** In pursuance of your request, allow me to give, for transmission to the Surgeon General at Washington, the following statement in regard to the use of the remedy "cundurango," in a case of cancer under my charge.

The patient E. H., aet. 35; married lady, mother of one child of two and a half years. Sixteen months before consulting me, her general health having been perfect, noticed a hard tumor the size of a walnut in the left breast, which increased rapidly in size until August last, when the cancerous tumor, (for such it proved to be,) weighing two pounds, was removed by the knife. The wound rapidly and perfectly healed. In November following a hard tumor again appeared in the same breast, which increased as rapidly as before, and in the month following the mass broke down by ulceration, which rapidly invaded the surrounding parts, extending beneath and slightly beyond the axilla. At this time, May 23, I first saw the patient. The excavation was quite down

to the ribs, and quite 4½ inches diameter, with edges depressed and ragged, the surface of the cavity emitting a thin, watery discharge, of most offensive odor. Hemorrhages, sometimes quite profuse, had occurred during the preceding three months, which had been controlled by application of lig. ferri persulph. A most distressing cough indicated the lungs to be involved in disease. The offensive odor had in a measure been lessened by the daily application of dry earth. The pain was severe and lancinating; right arm and leg edematous. In the right breast was a nodulated scirrhous tumor, involving about half of the gland. Countenance pinched and anxious; pulse was extremely attenuated and rapid. Having been able to procure only about five ounces, part of which you were kind enough to furnish me, of cundurango, (wood and bark together,) I was reluctant to even try its use, being satisfied that the quantity was insufficient to make a test. The article was divided into half-ounce portions, wood and bark together, using both in consequence of insufficient supply. This necessarily reduced the proper doses of bark to less than one-half. An infusion was made of each portion, with three teacupfuls of boiling water, and one teacupful, cold and slightly sweetened, was given twice a day. At this time I directed the constant use of anodynes, under the influence of which she had been previously kept, to be suspended, and only to be used at long intervals, say of twenty-four hours, and then only if indispensable. During the first five days there was no perceptible influence to be attributed to the remedy, except a comparative freedom from pain. On the sixth day there was a marked amelioration of all the prominent symptoms; the pulse was full, soft, and more regular; healthy granulations appeared at the bottom of the ulcer, bathed in laevitable pus, less offensive in odor, cough better, and the patient for the first time expressed a feeling of improvement. This condition continued for two days, when a hemorrhage occurred. Signs of exhaustion now appeared, the previous improvement was checked, the patient sank rapidly, and died of exhaustion on the 6th day of June, having taken the cundurango only ten days. The case was one of scirrhous, unfavorable to the test on account of the progress of the disease. The small quantity at my disposal rendered the experiment unsatisfactory; at no time could more than half doses be used.

I must say in conclusion, that though I am unwilling to express my opinion as to the merits of the remedy, its use was not attended with any ill effects, and I shall give it a further trial.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

G. GRANT.

Official copy:

C. H. CRANE,  
*Assistant Surgeon General.*

## No. 6.

*Mr. Fish to Mr. Capron.*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
Washington, April 20, 1871.

SIR: I transmit printed copies of a pamphlet containing a note to this Department from Mr. Flores, the minister of Ecuador, and dispatches from Mr. Wing, the minister of the United States in that republic. These papers relate to a medicament called "cundurango," recently discovered in that country, which is supposed to be an efficient remedy for cancer and other diseases. A sample of the article accompanies this letter. I will thank you to cause a chemical analysis to be made of it, if the means at your command will allow, and the result to be reported to this Department for the information of the government of Ecuador, as Mr. Flores requests.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

HAMILTON FISH.

General HORACE CAPRON,  
*Commissioner of Agriculture.*

Inclosure.—Pamphlet on "cundurango," No. 1, with sample of same.

*Mr. Capron to Mr. Fish.*

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
Washington, D. C., May 17, 1871.

DEAR SIR: Having received, during the month of April, a sample of the medicament called "cundurango," with printed pamphlet accompanying, for the purpose of having it examined in the laboratory of this Department, I have the honor now, according to your request, to furnish you with the result of the chemical analysis, as furnished by the chemist of this Department, and remain,

Your obedient servant,

HORACE CAPRON,  
Commissioner.

Hon. HAMILTON FISH,  
Secretary of State.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
Washington, D. C., May 17, 1871.

SIR: The sample of the plant forwarded to this Department under the name "cundurango," accompanied by a letter from Hon. Hamilton Fish, Secretary of Department of State, and printed pamphlet accompanying, has been submitted to examination and chemical analysis in this laboratory.

The sample consisted of stem and branches of apparently a shrubby plant; it was unaccompanied by leaf or root, so that its botanical relations cannot be as yet ascertained.

The stem is woody and covered by a greenish or ash-gray bark, the former tint being due to the coating of lichens on the surface; the branches are from half an inch to a little more than an inch in diameter, the average being about the thickness of the finger; the woody fiber is straw-colored and brittle, breaking with a sharp fracture; it is almost tasteless—slightly aromatic and bitter.

The bark contains whatever medicinal virtues are in the plant; it is of gray color, slightly ribbed or fluted longitudinally from corrugation, the result of drying; it increases in thickness in the ratio of increase of the stem, in the thicker branches constituting more than half the weight of the whole, in the thinner somewhat less than half, readily separable from the stem by pounding or bruising, when it comes off in clean longitudinal pieces, brittle in the transverse fracture; having a warm, aromatic, camphory, bitter taste, resembling the cascarrilla of the older collections; under the lens it is readily resolved into three layers: 1st, the inner layer, or cambium of reticular woody tissue, having granules of starch and particles of resin imbedded; 2d, a middle layer of woody fiber and dotted ducts, with resinous particles, also in this layer; and, 3d, the cuticular or outer layer of bark-cells, of a brown-color, and containing coloring-matters and tannic acid.

CHEMICAL ANALYSIS OF BARK.

Ratio of wood and bark:

Bark 49.72 }  
Wood 50.28 } Average of three observations.

Constitution in 100 parts:

Moisture .....	8
Mineral salts .....	12
Vegetable matters .....	80
	100
	==

These vegetable matters were separable by the usual reagents into the following:

Fatty matter, soluble in ether .....	7
Yellow resin, soluble in alcohol .....	2.7
Starch, gum, and glucose .....	5
Tannin, yellow and brown coloring-matter, and constituting extractive .....	12.6
Cellulose, lignin, &c .....	64.5
	80
	==

No volatile oil or acid was obtainable on distillation.

No crystalline alkaloid or active principle was separable by the usual methods of proximate analysis. Whatever medicinal virtues the plant may possess, must reside either in the yellow resin or in the extractive. The former is soluble in alcohol, the latter in water. In the water decoction some of the resin is diffused, but the great portion of the resinous matter is not extracted by the water.

The therapeutic position of the plant, judged from analysis, is among the aromatic bitters.

Respectfully,

THOMAS ANTISELL, M. D.,  
*Chemist to the Department.*

HON. HORACE CAPRON,  
*Commissioner.*

No. 8.

*Mr. Fish to President of New York Hospital.*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
Washington, April 22, 1871.

SIR: I transmit copies of a printed pamphlet containing a note to this Department from Mr. Flores, the minister of Ecuador here, and dispatches from Mr. Wing, the minister of the United States in that republic. These papers relate to a medicament called "cundurango," recently discovered in that country, which is supposed to be an efficient remedy for cancer and other diseases. A sample of the article accompanies this letter. I will thank you, if there should be no objection to that course, to cause it to be administered by the medical officers of the New York General Hospital, and the result to be communicated to this Department for the information of the government of Ecuador.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

HAMILTON FISH.

PRESIDENT NEW YORK HOSPITAL,  
*New York.*

[Same, *mutatis mutandis*, to the president of the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston.]

No. 9.

*Mr. Fish to Mr. Trimble.*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
Washington, June 15, 1871.

SIR: Referring to my letter to you of the 22d of April last, requesting you to cause to be administered by the medical staff of the New York Hospital the medicament called "cundurango," sent therewith, I will thank you to inform me of the result of the experiments made with the remedy referred to, in order that it may be communicated to the Ecuadorian government.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

HAMILTON FISH.

GEORGE T. TRIMBLE, Esq.,  
*President of the New York Hospital, New York.*

[Same, *mutatis mutandis*, to the President of Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston.]

## No. 10.

*Dr. Shaw to Mr. Fish.*

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL,  
*Boston, June 14, 1871.*

DEAR SIR: A few weeks since we received from the Department of State a sample of cundurango from South America, an alleged specific cure for cancer, with a request that we should try it and report the result.

We have tried the article in six cases, and find that we can make no report of its effects on account of the limited amount at our disposal. We would much like a further supply, as large as possible, as we find that the cases under treatment warrant further trial. If there is no more of the article at the disposal of the Department, we would beg that this application be placed on file, and a supply sent when possible.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

BENJAMIN S. SHAW, M. D.,

*Superintendent of the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston.*

Hon. HAMILTON FISH,  
*Secretary of State.*

## No. 11.

*Dr. Shaw to Mr. Fish.*

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL,  
*Boston, June 19, 1871.*

DEAR SIR: As to the medicinal effects of cundurango, a sample of which was sent to the Massachusetts General Hospital for trial, the officers of the institution respectfully report that they are as yet unprepared to express an opinion, for the reason that the supply of the article was small, and the time for experimentation short. It has been administered in six cases, four of them being still under treatment, but none as yet presenting any symptoms authorizing an expression of opinion as to the effects of the drug. The hospital has already written the Department of State, asking for a further supply of cundurango, which, if received, it will give a fair trial.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

BENJAMIN S. SHAW,  
*Resident Physician and Superintendent.*

Hon. HAMILTON FISH,  
*Secretary of State.*

## No. 12.

*Mr. Murray to Mr. Fish.*

NEW YORK HOSPITAL,  
*New York, August 1, 1871.*

SIR: I have the honor to state that your communication to the president of the board of governors of this institution, dated April 22, 1871,

requesting a report upon the merits of cundurango as a cure for cancer, was referred to the board of physicians and surgeons, who have now presented their report, of which the inclosed is an abstract.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. COLDEN MURRAY,

*Secretary.*

Hon. HAMILTON FISH,

*Secretary of State, Washington, D. C.*

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The undersigned, a committee of the physicians and surgeons of the New York Hospital, to whom were addressed certain packages of a remedy known as cundurango, and claimed to be a cure for cancer, which had been sent from the Department of State, in Washington, to the governors of the hospital, and by them referred to the medical officers of the hospital for trial, report that \* \* \* they distributed it among medical gentlemen of known capacity, to be administered by them according to directions accompanying the remedy, to patients under their charge suffering from cancer.

From the written reports of these gentlemen, the committee derive the following particulars, which they herewith submit:

Dr. John Dole, of Amherst, Massachusetts, writes, June 22, his patient was a lady, 44 years of age, mother of two sons. She had a hard, nodulated, flattened cancer, involving the entire right mamma, which was adherent to the ribs, and covered a space of between three and four inches in diameter. From the surface there oozed a thin serous discharge. In the right axilla and supraclavicular region there were hard nodules, evidently involving the axillary plexus of nerves, and causing severe neuralgic pains, extending down the arm. In the left mamma, which retained its form, though wasted, a hard, small nodule was felt. The disease had existed about two years and a half, and first developed itself locally, in the right mamma, soon after a severe blow on the part. For several years prior to the appearance of the cancer, her health had been deteriorated by repeated hemorrhages from hemorrhoids. These had been successfully operated on by ligation about three months before commencing the cundurango treatment. I can say but little concerning the action of cundurango, as most of the effects were negative. It was administered in the form of a decoction, (each dose representing what virtue could be thus extracted from exactly eighty grains of the powdered wood and bark,) given twice a day, at eight o'clock a. m. and p. m., two hours after food. You will remember Mrs. W's condition when she left New York. The following changes took place: 1st. The third day of administration she reported (unasked,) entire freedom from pain in the nodule, under the nipple of the left breast, which up to that time had been for weeks the seat of severe and constant lancinating pain. This pain never returned. 2d. On the fifth day, healthy granulations appeared at the edges of the sore, finally springing up in all parts of it, the whole surface presenting from that time a normal appearance; the right arm could be moved with freedom. 3d. The constitutional symptoms not modified, appetite, pulse, respiration, and temperature remaining the same. Bowels somewhat more constipated, but not markedly so. The neuralgic pains continued with unabated severity during the whole time of administration, and were quieted by McManus's Elixir Opii, given p. r. n. I noticed also the odor of perspiration, which was very marked and peculiar, like the odor emitted from an uncut cadaver. Odor of urine strong, but not unlike that of urine in many acute diseases. After each dose of the medicine (at an interval of from 15 to 30 minutes) a peculiar restlessness showed itself, which continued from two to three hours.

Summary: Medicine continued 17 days, a decoction representing 160 grains by weight per day. Total relief of pain in left breast. Improvement in character of sore and increase in power of right arm, with partial restoration of power of motion without pain. Noticeable change in odor of perspiration, and a peculiar restlessness following the administration of dose. Should say I witnessed this phenomenon fifteen times. Constitutional effect *nil*. The appetite gradually failed, but not more rapidly than could be accounted for by the discontinuance of tonics. In conclusion, Doctor, allow me to say I am very skeptical concerning the power of this remedy, but there was a curious coincidence between its administration and the modification of local symptoms. I tried to guard against any hasty conclusions in the matter. I have hope enough in its power to try it again in a case where the constitutional power was greater than in the case of Mrs. W. The exhibition was stopped eight days before her death, but I was absent, and cannot report on the effects of the change. Dr. B. assures me that the sore continued healthy until death.

Dr. F. A. Burrall, of New York, reports, July 10: I have been using an infusion of cundurango, prepared according to the official formula, in a case of rodent ulcer, or, as the disease is termed by C. S. Moore, F. R. C. S., rodent cancer. The ulceration occupied the helix and posterior portion of the right external ear and the adjacent part of the scalp. The patient had previously been using a lotion of a watery solution of carbolic acid, tannin, and glycerine, and the lotion was discontinued. During the six weeks which were necessary for a trial of the cundurango, the ulceration progressed slowly but steadily. No marked general symptoms accompanied the use of the medicine.

Dr. H. B. Sands, of New York, writes, July 15: My experience in the treatment of cancer by the cundurango plant is confined to a single case, in which the remedy was administered, according to the prescribed directions, for a fortnight. The patient, a lady residing in this city, suffers from cancer of the rectum, and at the time she began to take the medicine referred to the disease was already far advanced, causing a pretty close stricture of the gut. It was noticed that, during the brief period the cundurango was used, the cancerous growth increased with greater rapidity than at any previous time, and several large nodules of the morbid deposit appeared in the pelvis, causing a protrusion of the abdominal walls. The patient is still living, and intends to make another trial of the remedy whenever it can be obtained.

In conclusion, the committee do not consider the exaggerated pretensions claimed for the cundurango plant, as a cure for cancer, substantiated by the results of the trials herein reported. They would not, however, discourage more extensive and thorough trials of its virtues, especially if such trials could be prosecuted without enlisting popular sympathy, which has been already prematurely evoked, and that without at all promoting the attainment of truth.

GURDON BUCK, M. D.,

T. M. MARKOE, M. D.,

Vice W. H. DRAPER, M. D., absent.

Committee of Physicians and Surgeons of N. Y. Hospital.

NEW YORK, July 26, 1871.

Hon. HAMILTON FISH, *Secretary of State.*

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No. 13.

*Drs. Busey and Lee to Mr. Fish.*

2111 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, WASHINGTON, D. C.,  
July 24, 1871.

SIR: As editors of the National Medical Journal, published in this city, we have the honor to request of you the use for publication in that journal of the reports made to the State Department on the treatment of cancer by cundurango in this country, to be made use of in what manner may be deemed by you as most expedient.

This journal, through the courtesy of the Department, was enabled in May last to publish the official correspondence on the subject of cundurango, and has since that time been in receipt of numerous letters asking for further information on the subject, and any reports of cases, however negative may have been their results, will be regarded with great interest by the medical profession. The daily press has already given publicity to the result in these cases, without, of course, being enabled to give a detailed report.

Very respectfully, your obedient servants,

S. C. BUSEY, M. D.  
WM. LEE, M. D.

Hon. HAMILTON FISH,  
*Secretary of State.*

## No. 14.

*Dr. Ashford to Mr. Fish.*

1330 NEW YORK AVENUE, WASHINGTON, D. C.,

August 29, 1871.

DEAR SIR: The Medical Society of the District of Columbia, being desirous to determine the efficacy of the drug called cundurango, some of which had been distributed through the Department of State, that its value might be tested, appointed a committee to investigate its claims as a reputed cure for cancer and other diseases.

Not being able to secure any of the article for direct experiment, and understanding that several reports have been rendered to your Department upon the subject, we desire, as the committee of the medical society, to be allowed to examine such reports.

Respectfully, &c.,

F. A. ASHFORD, M. D.,  
*Secretary of Committee.*

Hon. HAMILTON FISH,  
*Secretary of State.*

## No. 15.

*Mr. Weile to Mr. Fish.*

No. 45.

UNITED STATES CONSULATE,  
*Guayaquil, August 25, 1871.*

SIR: I have to report that I have just returned from a visit to the cundurango region, in the province of Loja, where I spent one month in collecting the different species of the plant.

As the mail steamer leaves to-day, I will have to confine my remarks to the most important facts.

Dr. Desfruge, of this city, an excellent botanist, has classified the vine as belonging to the order *Asclepiadaceæ*. The word *cundurango* is Quichua, and is a compound of Cundur, eagle, and Anglo, a vine. The aborigines probably applied this name owing to its winding growth, and because it seeks the highest trees for its support.

Its growth is most vigorous in moist places on the banks of rivers and creeks, where the body often attains a diameter of from two to three inches, diminishing gradually to tendrils at the top. The family is a numerous one. Leaves, vines, fruits, and flowers of the species differ materially, but all contain, some in a greater degree than others, a liquid that resembles milk, and which, exposed to heat, or coming in contact with other bodies, coagulates, and forms an aromatic, resinous substance.

The healing properties of the milk have long been known to the natives. Applied to wounds it stops the blood, and ulcers are rapidly cicatrized. It is diffused through the bark, a small portion in the heart, in capsules. The root of one kind, called *Mata Perro*, (dog-killer,) is considered poisonous, but my experiments on animals failed to produce such a result. The story of its discovery by a woman who desired to rid herself of her leprous husband, is already known. It is said to have occurred at a place named Casaugas, canton of Calvas.

There must be something chimerical about this story, since it is related in many different ways, and the place variously located.

I took the root without the least inconvenience to myself.

Dr. Keene cured a most hopeless case of syphilis at Zaruma with the kind known there as *Tumbo grande*, and its use for cutaneous diseases is becoming general among the people.

The country where it is found presents a most fertile field for botanical science. Almost every plant, shrub, and flower has medicinal properties, an examination of which would, no doubt, lead to important discoveries.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have, &c.,

CHAS. WEILE,  
United States Consul.

Hon. HAMILTON FISH,  
Secretary of State, Washington, D. C.

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*List of specimens of cundurango sent to the Department of State by C. Weile, United States consul, in charge of Dr. P. T. Keene.*

LEAVES AND FLOWERS.

- No. 1. Cundurango Pepino, leaf and flowers, found at Zaruma.
- No. 2. Cundurango Tumbo Grande, leaf and buds, found at Zaruma.
- No. 3. Cundurango Tumbo Chico, leaves, found at Zaruma.
- No. 4. Cundurango, variety of Tumbo Grande, leaf, found at Zaruma.
- No. 5. Cuudurango Paloma, leaf, found at Zaruma.
- No. 6. Cundurango Batea, leaf, found at Zaruma.
- No. 7. Cundurango Calera, leaf, found at Zaruma.

FRUITS.

- No. 1. Pepino.
- No. 2. Tumbo Grande.
- No. 3. Tumbo Chico.
- No. 4. Variety of Tumbo Grande.
- No. 5. Paloma.
- No. 6. Batea.

VINES.

- No. 1. Root and vine of Pepino; (same found in Loja.)
- No. 2. Root and vine, Tumbo Grande, found at Zaruma.
- No. 3. Vine, Tumbo Chico, found at Zaruma.
- No. 4. Variety of Tumbo Grande, found at Zaruma.
- No. 5. Vine, Palonia.
- No. 6. Vine, Batea.
- No. 7. Vine, Calera.

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No. 16.

*Mr. Wing to Mr. Fish.*

137.]

UNITED STATES LEGATION,  
Quito, Ecuador, August 26, 1871.

SIR:

\* \* \* \* \*

Further exploration has evinced the existence of several classes of the plant or vine, generally known as cundurango among the natives, which vary very much in their effects upon disease.

Hence the correspondence, hereto appended, (copy and translation 1 and 2,) may be essential to purchasers and consumers.

Doubtless there is danger that ignorant or reckless speculators may foist an inferior or worthless article upon the markets, and that the genuine and efficacious species may not everywhere receive a thorough and proper trial.

Hence much care should be exercised, until the best quality has become well known to drug dealers and the medical fraternity.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have the honor to remain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
RUMSEY WING.

Hon. HAMILTON FISH,  
*Secretary of State, &c., &c., &c.*

[Extract.]

REPUBLIC OF ECUADOR,  
*Military Hospital, Guayaquil, August 12, 1871.*

SIR: In the month of May of last year I received a few pounds of cundurango through the authorities, to experiment with. For fourteen months I have been assaying the properties of this new vegetable, not only in the establishment under my charge, but also in private practice, and I am happy to communicate to your excellency that this plant will do, in a very short time, better service than the quinine that is extracted from the woods of the favored province of Loja.

I commenced my experiments with various internal complaints, obtaining admirable results on several cases of rheumatism, neuralgia, and otalgia, as also in a case of eczema, after having employed all the other means advised, without any good results.

In the cancer, before and after the ulceration, the cundurango is the most powerful agent, and can be qualified as the specific for this horrible scourge.

On one of the most notable persons of the country, whom I treated during the fearful duration of a cancer of the tongue, that had destroyed more than half of this organ, prescribing this plant under different forms and combinations, I have obtained a splendid triumph, the complete disappearance of the cancer, together with the accompanying of diathesis and swellings that made a deformity of all the base of the jaw-bone and neck; but had the misfortune to lose the patient in consequence of a sudden relapse of disease that had troubled him for several years—an excess of asthma, which gave rise to asphyxia, that carried him off in an hour, during the convalescence of a fever that he had contracted, some time after having made a radical cure of the cancer.

At present I have under my charge a lady, very well known, who had a cancer upon the left breast, which has been reproduced in two points of the enormous sear, and having been recommended by various persons to undergo a new operation, preferred my care, and I obtained what will be in fifteen days a complete cure.

Two cases more I have to refer to, in which, if I have not obtained entire success, it has been on account of special circumstances of the patients, but in them I have proved the sure and efficacious action of the cundurango. Later I will give a more detailed report of the action of the cundurango and of its results, with documentary proof that will convince all, even to the most incredulous; I regret, however, that my field of observation is so reduced.

It is just that the sons of the country profit by these providential discoveries, and that in honor of the nation to take part, without expecting everything from abroad.

Now the exportation commences with furor, hotly disputing the speculations, causing fraud to intervene, as they export portions of the vine, sell it at high price, without it being the true cundurango.

\* \* \* \* \*

H. CHIRIBOGA.

The GENERAL COMMANDING THE DISTRICT.

H. Mis. 65—2

No. 17.

*Mr. Wing to Mr. Fish.*

No. 143.]

UNITED STATES LEGATION,  
*Quito, Ecuador, September 14, 1871.*

SIR: In addition to the inclosures in my dispatch 137, I herewith forward two articles taken from a Guayaquil paper concerning the cundurango:

No. 1 is a letter by a pharmacist of Guayaquil, of whose personal skill and aptitude I know nothing, but I inclose it, nevertheless.

No 2 is a communication from the surgeon-in-chief of the government hospitals, who is reported to be a gentleman of decided ability in his profession.\*

I particularly commend this last inclosure to perusal, as it contains matters relative to the exportation and sale of the cundurango, which had occurred to me as possible heretofore, (see my dispatch No. 137,) and which should render purchasers, if these statements are not erroneous, exceedingly careful in securing the article.

Having called attention to it because I believed it to be my duty to do so, I have no interest in the matter beyond that of seeing it patiently and fully tested.

But that I do most earnestly wish to see; and such a test cannot, of course, be made, unless the real cundurango is obtained.

I learn that it exists in large quantities throughout Southern Ecuador, and there is no reason why purchasers need permit themselves to be deceived by a spurious article, if any such should, at any time, unfortunately reach the American markets.

I do not forward a translation of Dr. Chiriboga's communication, as owing to the medical terms used, and the variety of tests suggested therein, I would prefer that the translator of the Department should make it, for the sake of absolute certainty and accuracy.

Allow me to suggest that it be made public at once.

I have the honor to remain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

RUMSEY WING.

Hon. HAMILTON FISH,  
*Secretary of State, &c., &c., &c.*

[From "Los Andes," of Guayaquil, August 30, 1871.]

CUNDURANGO.

The plant which bears this name, and which now absorbs public attention, is a climbing shrub, having a woody stalk, and a milky juice; its stalk is cylindrical in shape, as are also its branches, with slightly nodous articulations; it is about six inches in diameter; the leaves, which are six or eight inches long, are opposite, petiolate, simple, entire, without stipules, of an oval shape, pointed at the ends, with both sides silky to the touch, and of a somewhat dark green; the flowers are axillary, arranged in panicles, complete, small, and remind one of the European lime-tree; the calix is gamosepalous, and the corolla gamopetalous, both having five lobules; the inner portion of the corolla, as well as the exterior of the calix, and the peduncles, is pubescent; it has five stamens, with their small filaments and their anthers joined, and thus forming a single central body with the pistil; these anthers contain the pollen in a solid mass; the ovary is double, superior; the fruit is composed of two follicles, six or eight inches in length, angular, striated, united at the base and the vertex while it is still unripe, (and probably inclined in a contrary direction after it

\* See accompaniment to Mr. Wing's dispatch No 156, post.

has become ripe,) having the ventral suture at the sides where it joins; these follicles contain numerous seeds of an oval shape, blackish, compressed, pendant from a bunch of silky hairs, or *coma*, the union of which forms a group around the prolongation of the axis, terminating on the outside with the seeds in a perfect imbrication.

It is seen, by this description, that this valuable plant belongs to the *Asclepias* family, approximating to the genus *Periploca* (ord. nat.,) or *Pentandria digynia* of Linnaeus.

The trunk of the cundurango is composed of a yellowish white wood, not very heavy, its density, at +25° cent., being 0.623, or about that of pine wood; the bark is but little fibrous, granulous to the touch, of a gray color in all that portion which forms the bark properly so called; when the trunk is dry, its bark is removed with some difficulty; the bark has a bitter, aromatic taste, and a balsamic odor which reminds one somewhat of copaiva.

One hundred grammes of bark, coarsely pulverized, and made into a decoction in water until its strength is exhausted, produce 23 grammes of aqueous extract of a pillular consistency. The same quantity of wood, treated in the same manner, produces 8 grammes and 30 centigrammes of extract of the same consistency, but of a lighter color, and less bitter and aromatic.

The same quantity (100 grammes) of bark, treated with alcohol at 34° in a suitable apparatus, produces 12 grammes of alcoholic extract, of a pillular consistency; the same quantity of the wood, with the same conditions, produces 9 grammes, 50 centigrammes, of the same consistency.

It is a remarkable circumstance that, although when an incision is made in the bark while fresh, a milky juice exudes, which is converted by the action of the air into a yellowish resin, (which is observed to a very limited extent in the wood,) the wood contains a larger portion of matter which is soluble in alcohol, relatively, and the bark a larger portion of matter which is soluble in water, since the wood yields a larger quantity, in proportion, of alcoholic extract, and the bark a larger quantity, in proportion, of aqueous extract.

Two hundred grammes having been subjected to the usual method of isolating the active principles, there were obtained; 1st, 10 centigrammes of a white substance, insoluble in water and in cold alcohol, somewhat soluble in ether, and very soluble in boiling alcohol, neutral, slightly acrid, and presenting, when examined with the microscope, no regular crystalline form, but an amorphous structure; 2d, this substance having been removed when the alcoholic residuum became cold, and the latter having evaporated (B. M.) until it became dry, there was finally obtained 1 grammme 40 centigrammes of a yellow resinous substance, of a strong odor, similar to that of benzoin; this substance, when applied to the skin, produced a sensation of heat accompanied with itching; it was insoluble in water, but little soluble in ether, and soluble in cold alcohol, with no sensible action upon reactive paper, but precipitating like ammoniac in the form of a white pulverulent substance. This decomposition indicates the presence, if not of benzoic acid, of some other isomeric with it, which combines with a strong alkali like ammoniac to form a true salt.

I have been obliged to suspend my investigations here by reason of the small quantity of cundurango which has been at my disposal, until I receive a larger supply.

N. FUENTES,  
Professor of Pharmacy.

GUAYAQUIL, August 23, 1871.

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No. 18.

*Mr. Wing to Mr. Fish.*

156.]

UNITED STATES LEGATION,

Quito, Ecuador, October 19, 1871.

SIR: I forward a copy of an article from the pen of the surgeon of the military hospitals of Guayaquil, which I find published in a late issue of the official organ at this capital, relative to the cundurango. Its length precludes me from translating it in time for this mail.

I call especial attention to the statements relative to the cancer cures effected, according to the report.

I am, &c., most respectfully, your obedient servant,

RUMSEY WING.

Hon. HAMILTON FISH,

Secretary of State, &c., &c., &c.

[Extract.]

[From the Panama Star and Herald.]

OCTOBER 1, 1871.

## THE TRUE AND THE FALSE CUNDURANGO.

Dr. Chiriboga, of Guayaquil, says: I have for the past fifteen months made a particular study of the physical qualities and medical effects of the cundurango, as well in the hospital under my charge as in private practice. I have observed attentively the action of this plant on various complaints, administered in the form of tincture, extract, and decoction. I have proved to my own satisfaction that it has many wonderful qualities, especially in the following:

In rheumatism, (tendinous or muscular,) in various neuralgias, in earaches and various skin diseases, in many diseases of the blood, in cancerous diseases, (sarataxes,) against which it may be regarded as a specific.

The astonishing improvement obtained in two cases of open cancer of the breast, and the complete disappearance of another non-ulcerated cancer, as well as the marvelous cure of a cancer in the tongue of a gentleman who was once president of this republic, and many other well-attested cases, leave no room for doubt concerning the efficacy of cundurango in this terrible disease.

In the United States various publications have been made of the good effects of this plant in cancerous affections, even with the small quantity of cundurango sent by the government of Ecuador for that purpose; so much so, that speculations in the plant are now the rage, but, unfortunately, a criminal fraud may cast discredit upon this great discovery.

Whether from ignorance or cupidity, large quantities of other varieties have been introduced into the market, particularly of one known by the name of bejuco pachon, to be exported as the true cundurango.

The former vine, it is true, belongs also to the family of Asclepiadæ, being dicotyledonous gamopetalous, a climbing, milky shrub, indigenous to America.

One of a number of the various species is cultivated in the gardens in Europe, (Asclepiadæ syriaca,) and known by the name of wild-cotton or silk-plant, from the silky protuberances found upon the seeds.

The properties of this numerous family are so varied that some are emetic, others tonic, anthelmintic, &c.

It is only the cundurango which, beside being tonic, deobstruent, and diuretic, is distinguished by the singular and providential quality of being anti-cancerous.

Speculators in the plant ought to be careful to get the right species. Beside the botanical characteristics by which it is distinguished, and the smaller quantity of resin peculiar to the cundurango, evident at first sight, a knowledge of the following peculiarities may be useful for the purpose of distinguishing the two vines: A highly concentrated infusion of cundurango gives no reaction with test-paper; that made with the bejuco pachon is slightly alkaline; that of the cundurango, treated by ammonia, gives a fine orange-yellow tint, whereas the other yields a greenish yellow. The cundurango gives out an odor of pyrolignous acid, treated by concentrated nitric acid, which is not the case with the other vine. The decoction has a straw color, and a characteristic odor, semi-balsamic, and somewhat like that of the nutmeg. This is, of itself, sufficient to distinguish it from the other, which is turbid, mucilaginous, and odorous.

There are two more species of cundurango, one of a pale yellow and the other black. The use of the latter requires much precaution in the doses given.

The above characteristics are meant for the white cundurango. The bark alone is used, as the woody fiber is too weak.

I have thought it necessary to make these brief statements, in order to prevent results which might prove disastrous to mankind in general, and this nation in particular.

HONORATO CHIRIBOGA.

GUAYAQUIL, August 30, 1871.

No. 19.

Mr. Wing to Mr. Fish.

162.]

UNITED STATES LEGATION,

Quito, Ecuador, October 27, 1871.

SIR: Herewith I have the honor to forward an article (1) from "Los Andes," of Guayaquil, of October 7, 1871, and, also one from "El Nacional," (2) of Quito, of October 18, 1871, relative to the cundurango.

As bearing upon a subject that has evidently excited considerable inquiry, I have deemed it proper to forward them.

I am, most respectfully, your obedient servant,

RUMSEY WING.

Hon. HAMILTON FISH,

*Secretary of State, &c., &c., &c.*

OCTOBER 30, 1871.

I have the honor to add (3 and 4) a copy and translation of the law fixing an export duty upon the cundurango.

[From "Los Andes," Guayaquil, October 7, 1871.]

CUNDURANGO.

In view of various fortunate cases, which Heaven has favored me during four years of diligent study, I can fearlessly assert that this vegetable will cure syphilis, in all its stages, with more certainty than sarsaparilla; it cures ulcerations of the intestines, the uterus, the vagina, the urethra, &c., when caused by syphilis; likewise rheumatism, and some dermatic affections, causing diathesis to disappear.

I have not been so fortunate as the distinguished professors who have succeeded in curing cases of cancer, and who believe this plant to be a specific for that terrible malady; but having been an eye-witness of the sufferings, from cancer, of Mr. Diego Nodoa, whom I urged to take this remedy, sending him a portion of the best quality, and being now assured, by reliable persons, that he recovered and died of another disease, I hope that time and further experiments will confirm this belief; I only fear that its application to the various diseases in which it is thought to be beneficial may prove a failure, discredit thus being brought upon it by the extravagance with which it is recommended.

DANIEL TEODORO JARAMILLO.

GUAYAQUIL, October 5, 1871.

[From "El Nacional," Quito, October 18, 1871.]

CUNDURANGO.

For a long time Mrs. N., of Cuenca, had been suffering from an ulcer on her tongue; this at length became so painful that the amputation of the tongue was deemed necessary by her physicians, they seeing no other way to arrest the progress of the ulceration, which was, apparently, of a cancerous nature.

In this desperate situation, they decided to administer cundurango to the patient. They did so, and we now learn that the result has been most successful, for, according to various letters from Cuenca, Mrs. N. is entirely restored to health.

QV 2971 1822



